



December 2014

WORLD AIDS DAY 2014

December 1st marks the 26th annual recognition of World AIDS Day, which is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV, and commemorate people who have died from complications related to the virus. World AIDS Day was the first-ever global health day; the first one was held in 1988. The over-arching theme, which will be in place from 2011-2015, is *Getting to Zero* and the theme for 2014 is *Focus, Partner, Achieve: An AIDS-free Generation*. Consistent with the first goal of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy – to minimize new HIV infections – the **California Department of Public Health, Center for Infectious Diseases, Office of AIDS (OA)** embraces the theme of World AIDS Day and joins in this worldwide effort to implement strategies that will prevent new HIV infections, and provide adequate and effective care/treatment and support services for those who are already infected with HIV.

Since 1983, over 200,000 people have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in California. Of these, almost half have succumbed to the virus. However, people with HIV are living longer and healthier lives due to improved medical treatment and care, causing the death rate from HIV/AIDS to decline and the number of persons living with HIV/AIDS to steadily increase every year. While the overall number of new infections each year has been decreasing, 4,960 individuals were newly diagnosed with HIV infection in California in 2012.

In honor of World AIDS Day, the Office of AIDS has released an update to the [**Continuum of HIV Care in California**](#). At the end of 2012, OA estimates that there were approximately 135,000 Californians living with HIV, but only 84% knew that they are infected. Among all Californians living with HIV, 40% achieved viral suppression in 2012. This is an improvement compared to 2010, and Californians living with HIV continues to have higher levels of viral suppression than the national average. However, we still have substantial work to do.

OA has set three goals that are especially relevant to both the Continuum of Care and the World AIDS Day theme *Getting to Zero*. The first is to identify individuals with HIV infection, which will occur through HIV testing in non-medical community settings and opt-out HIV testing in medical settings. The second is linkage to and retention/re-engagement in care for individuals who know they are HIV-infected, as well as a comprehensive assessment of prevention needs for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWH/A) in care and non-care settings. And the third is to reduce the viral load for individuals and the community, a scientific strategy shown to reduce new HIV infections.

These three goals will be achieved in a variety of ways, such as through the use of surveillance data; distributing condoms at targeted venues such as bathhouses, bars and clubs by LHJs (local health jurisdictions); and supporting syringe services programs that serve high-risk individuals, supporting the implementation of new biomedical HIV prevention methods such as Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) among others.

OA continues to support the goals of the World AIDS Day campaign to eventually eliminate all new HIV infections. OA would also like to recognize the efforts of providers, across the spectrum of prevention, detection, care/treatment and support services, who work to combat this disease. To support these efforts, OA would like to share the following:

- Click [here](#) to access World AIDS Days resources
- Click [here](#) to view the Office of AIDS website
- Click [here](#) to view Office of AIDS Continuum of HIV Care in California — 2012
- Click [here](#) to find local HIV test sites
- Click [here](#) to find HIV/AIDS-related medical care information and local facilities
- Click [here](#) to learn about pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a new prevention option

In recognition of World AIDS Day and toll of HIV/AIDS internationally and specifically within California among those who have been infected and/or affected by this disease, OA urges all persons to become more aware of the risks of HIV and to get tested, and if positive, to seek medical and other support services.

